THE WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT

Published by the East London Federation of the Suffragettes.

Edited by SYLVIA PANKHURST.

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Bravely and willingly we bear our share of the World's burdens. Why, then, deny us the right to Vote, which would dignify our labour and increase our Power of Service.

OUR FIRST ANNUAL REPORT.

This First Annual Report of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes covers a period of two years, for though the East London Federation of the Suffragettes will not have its birthday until January 27th; its beginnings were in October, 1912.

During the summer of 1912, Lady Sybil Smith, Mrs. Drummond, a number of local organisations of W.S.P.U., and I had co-operated in organising a series of popular Votes for Women demonstrations on the western side of London, and after these we agreed that the popular campaign must be carried into East London, not merely with the object of holding a series of fugitive demonstrations, but in order that a permanent Suffrage movement might be built up.

There were many reasons for this step:—On the one hand, the women of East London suffer, perhaps, more from evil social conditions than the people of any other part of the civilised world, and, therefore, these women, perhaps more than any others, most urgently need the Vote. On the other hand, the comparative nearness to the House of Commons of this vast industrial area makes it possible for the women who live there to bring the pressure of a popular protest to bear on Parliament in a more effective way than that which is possible to their fellows who live further afield.

Kensington, Chelsea and Paddington W.S.P.U.'s agreed to help in opening up the East London propaganda, and centres were at once started by them in Bethnal Green, Stepney, Limehouse and Poplar. The W.S.P.U. headquarters at Lincoln's Inn House rented a shop in Bow Road, and I collected a body of voluntary workers for that district. After six weeks' work a big procession and demonstration was held in Victoria Park, on November 10th, 1912. Immediately after the demonstration came the Bow and Bromley by-election, in which Mr. George Lansbury, a Labour Member of Parliament for the constituency, resigned his seat, in order to be free to fight on the Votes for Women issue. All the Suffrage societies helped in the by-election, but Mr. Lansbury was not returned.

Soon after the by-election, and originally at my suggestion, preparations began to be made for the Working Women's Deputation to Mr. Lloyd George. Though volunteers for the Deputation were invited from all over the country, by far the largest number came from East London, and the various East London districts were the most systematically worked.

The Speaker allowed a gathering of 50 of the women in the Grand Committee Room of Westminster Hall, but of the thousands who had volunteered for the Deputation only twelve were finally chosen to go to Downing Street. These included: a Poplar laundress, a home-worker who made pinafores at sweated rates in Bow, a waste rubber worker from Poplar, and the wife of a labourer earning 22s. a week, who had eight children and lived in a wretched two-roomed tenement in Bethnal Green, for which she paid 5s. a week in rent.

Mr. Lloyd George assured the Deputation that the Votes for Women Amendments to the Reform Bill would be carried, but the same night the Speaker announced that if this were done the whole Reform Bill would be out of order.

After the Working Women's Deputation was over most of the West London workers left the East End, and all financial aid from the W.S.P.U. headquarters was finally withdrawn.

Opening of Roman Road Shop.

I was determined that the East End work must go on. A few pounds still remained in the Popular Campaign fund, and Lady Sybil Smith, who was treasurer, agreed that this should be devoted to East End work. We, therefore, decided to take the risk of opening a permanent East End headquarters in Bow, and took a shop and house at 321 Roman Road, at a rental of 14s. 6d. a week. It was the only shop to let in the road. The shop window was broken right across, and was only held together by putty. The landlord would not put in new glass, nor would he repair the many holes in the shop and passage flooring, because he thought we should only stay a short time. But all such things have since been done.

Plenty of friends at once rallied round us. Women who had joined the Union in the last few weeks came in and scrubbed the floors and cleaned the windows. Mrs. Wise, who kept the sweet shop next door, lent us a trestle table for a counter, and helped us to put up purple, white and green flags. Her little boy took down the shutters for us every morning, and put them up each night, and her little girls often came in to sweep. A week after the shop was opened Miss Emerson and I were arrested. We went to prison on Friday night, February 14th, 1913, and our fines were paid on Saturday at noon. We had been hunger-striking, and as soon as we had broken our fast we went back to Bow. We found Mrs. Lake scrubbing the table, and as many other members as the shop would hold talking about the situation, and wondering how we were getting on.

First East London Imprisonments

On the following Monday, February 17th, we held a meeting at the Obelisk, and after it was over Mrs. Watkins, Mrs. Moor, Miss Annie Lansbury, and I broke an undertaker's window. Mr. Will Lansbury broke a window in the Bromley Public Hall, and Miss Emerson broke a Liberal Club window. We were all six arrested, and sent to prison without the option of a fine.

That was the beginning of Militancy in East London. Miss Emerson, Mrs. Watkins and I decided to do the hunger-strike, and hoped that we should soon be out to work again. But though Mrs. Watkins was released after 10 days, Miss Emerson and I were forcibly fed for upwards of five weeks.

Meanwhile, a tremendous flame of enthusiasm had burst forth in the East End. Great meetings were held, and during our imprisonment long processions marched eight times the six miles to the gates of Holloway to cheer us.

Early in April the anti-Suffragist Government entered on a strenuous campaign of Suffragette persecution.

Mrs. Pankhurst, Annie Kenney and others were sentenced for conspiracy. A musty old Statute of Edward III, which was directed by that Monarch and his Government against pillers and robbers from beyond the seas, was raked up, and under it Mr. George Lansbury and others were summonsed for their Suffrage speeches. Attempts were made to prohibit the publication of the newspaper, *The Suffragette*, and militant Suffrage meetings were prohibited in Hyde Park.

The police kept the Suffragette platforms out of the Park, but they could not prevent the women speaking. Nevertheless, anti-Suffragist hooligans and police together might have given the speakers a bad time but for the help of the East London dockers, who fought to protect the women Sunday after Sunday.

On Sunday, May 25th, 1913, was held "Woman's May Day" in East London. The Members in Bow, Bromley, Poplar, and neighbouring districts had prepared for it for many weeks past, and had made hundreds of almond branches, which were carried in a great procession with purple, white and green flags, and caps of Liberty, from the East India Dock Gates, by winding ways, to Victoria Park. A vast crowd of people—then said to be the biggest ever seen in East London—assembled in the Hyde Park of East London to hear the speakers from 20 platforms.

Formation of Federation.

A few days later the organisation, which was then called the East London Federation of the W.S.P.U., was formally set up, to unite for greater strength the local Unions that had been formed in Bow, Bromley, Poplar, Limehouse and Hackney. Canning Town has since been added to the number. It was decided that the Federation Council should consist of the Hon. Secretary, the Hon. Treasurer, the Hon. Financial and Hon. Meetings Secretaries, the Hon. Advertisement Manager, the District Secretaries and Organisers, and two elected representatives of the Members in each district.

Our First Trafalgar Square Meeting.

On Sunday, June 29th, 1913, the East London Federation organised a big procession to Trafalgar Square, in which Suffrage Societies and Trades' Unions and Labour Organisations joined. There was an immense crowd in the Square. But of what use was one more big Meeting where so many had been held? The "Cat and Mouse" Act had just been passed, and under it Mrs. Pankhurst and a number of other hunger-strikers were being ruthlessly dragged back and back to prison. Their lives were at stake. Emily Wilding Davison, impressed by their peril, had given her own life to make the nation think. On June 4th she had flung herself into the midst of the Derby racehorses, and had been killed. In face of such happenings what was the use of talking? The need was for an emphatic public protest. I asked the people to go and hoot the Cabinet Ministers, and, if they were able, to do more than hoot—to imprison the Cabinet Ministers in their official residences, as they had imprisoned more than 2,000 women Suffragists, until the Ministers would agree to give women the Vote.

I had hardly finished speaking when the people were streaming off down Whitehall, and soon they were hooting and shouting "Votes for Women" outside Mr. Asquith's house. Police reinforcements were immediately hurried across from Scotland Yard to force the people away, and a sharp struggle took place, in which five men were arrested.

The following Thursday, July 3rd, I, too, was summonsed under the antique Statute of Edward III to appear at Bow Street, on July 5th. I did not consider it my duty to obey, and instead I went away for the week-end, and then made my way to the Bromley Public Hall in Bow Road, where I had promised to speak. After the meeting the people rallied unanimously, and fought to protect me from the detectives, who had come with a warrant for my arrest. Eventually I was taken prisoner with five others, one of whom was Miss Mary Richardson.

After remaining the night at Bow Street, I was sentenced next morning to three months' imprisonment, because I would not promise not to make militant speeches. On reaching prison I started the hunger-and-thirst strike.

CANNING TOWN BABIES WHO THRIVE ON OUR MILK.

ORIGINAL DETECTIVE.

The "Cat and Mouse" Act Applied in East London.

East London was in a state of great excitement, and our members decided that I ought to come down and stay there in order that they might all help to protect me from re-arrest. Mrs. Payne and her husband, both of whom were shoe-makers living at 28 Ford Road, Bow, asked me to stay with them as their guest, and I went straight there on my release the following Sunday. Splendid meetings were held during my week's license at Bromley Public Hall and Poplar Town Hall. On the Monday after the license expired I got to the Bromley Public Hall Meeting in disguise, and so splendidly did the good people fight with me to forward Votes for Women, and smash the "Cat and Mouse" Act, that detectives and policemen were held at bay, and I was rushed away into safety by the crowd. This was the first time that the police met with organised resistance when attempting to arrest a Suffragist prisoner.

Second Trafalgar Square Meeting.

On Sunday, July 27th, the East London Federation organised another great March to Trafalgar Square. The Square was densely packed with people. In spite of a veritable host of policemen and detectives, I was able to get there in disguise, and just at the moment when the principal superintendent of police was asking if I had arrived, and his lieutenants were replying in the negative, I was taking my seat on the back of one of Landseer's lions. When I came, undisguised, from a sheltering group of friends, the people with cheers eagerly agreed to go to Downing Street to carry our Women's Declaration of Independence (a big petition for the Vote, which had been largely signed in East London) to the Prime Minister's official residence.

It was said that no meeting so large had been held there since the eighties.

At the top of Whitehall, policemen on horseback met us. We rushed between them and pressed on, but after a struggle I was dragged off to Holloway by detectives, the crowd was beaten back, and 27 people, including Mrs. Pascoe and Miss Billing, were arrested.

Next day Mr. Lansbury's appeal against the sentence imposed upon him under the Act of Edward III was decided against him. He was taken to Holloway on Wednesday, July 30th, but on adopting the hunger-strike he was released on a "Cat and Mouse" license the next Saturday, and was never re-arrested.

Third Trafalgar Square Meeting.

On August 10th, the Free Speech Defence Committee, a composite body on which sit many Radical and Labour Members of Parliament and Labour leaders, announced a demonstration in Trafalgar Suare to protest against the Government's many attempts to suppress the rights of free speech and public meeting, and especially against the prosecution of speakers under the Act of Edward III. I was asked to speak with Mr. Lansbury and Mr. Scurr, and Mrs. Cohen (who had also been summoned under the Act, though never sent to prison) on condition that I would pledge myself not to lead the crowd to Downing Street. I replied that I could not agree to this condition, and issued a leaflet "To Lovers of Freedom," saying that after the Free Speech people had done their talking, I should be present in the Square to go with those who cared to come to the Prime Minister's official residence. This I did, and the vast majority of those present went with me as far as we could go. When we were beaten back by the mounted police, 18 people besides myself were arrested, and the windows of a motor-'bus were broken.

These demonstrations of militant popular support were a fine answer to those who were saying that public opinion was against the women in their fight for liberty. Moreover, they were doing a tremendous amount of good all over the country, for following the cue of East London, working people from Lands End to John o' Groats were beginning, more than they had ever done before, to feel that Votes for Women was their question.

Police Raid Bow Baths.

On August 10th, Parliament was prorogued, and during the holiday season steady propaganda work was carried on. On October 13th a big meeting was held in Bow Baths.

I got there in disguise. The people held the front door against the police and detectives, but I had not been speaking ten minutes when policemen sprang on to the platform from behind the curtains, with truncheons drawn. The people shouted "Jump, Sylvia, jump!" I jumped as they told me, from the platform into the audience, and turned for a moment half dazed with the shock, to see policemen with truncheons and detectives with loaded sticks striking the people, who were crowded on the platform, and smashing the chairs. Mrs. Mary Leigh was knocked insensible, Mrs. Ives was held up by the collar and struck with a truncheon, so that her arm was broken. Miss Forbes Robertson, sister of the great actor, also had her arm broken, and many unknown men and women were seriously hurt. The people in the gallery retaliated by throwing chairs down on to the police. People in the audience then stole up behind me, put somebody's hat and coat on me, and led me out that I might speak in Poplar Town Hall next night.

As Miss Emerson was leaving the hall a detective, who was annoyed because the people called "Puss! Puss!" to him, struck her on the side of the head with a lead-weighted instrument. Mr. Mansell-Moullin, the noted surgeon, stated, on examining her, that Miss Emerson's skull was fractured and that if the blow had been struck an eighth of an inch further back she would certainly have been killed.

Next night I was recognized by the detectives, who crowded the steps of the Poplar Town Hall, and a couple of hundred policemen had closed round me before the people could get to me. A man and his wife who rushed towards me were arrested.

I was released after nine days. Though obliged to be carried to speak at Bow Baths and Poplar Town Hall on a stretcher during my week's licence, I was able to be up and doing at the end of the week. A few days after the expiration of my licence I spoke at the Royal Albert Hall and the Hackney Baths, and was so well protected by the people that I was able to get away in safety.

Police Raid in Roman Road.

On November 5th, 1913, another meeting was held in Bow Baths, and on my way here I happened to call at Mr. Lansbury's house in St. Stephen's Road. The house was immediately surrounded by detectives and policemen, and there seemed no possibility of escape. But the people of Bow, on hearing of the trouble, came flocking out of the Baths where they had assembled. In the confusion that ensued the detectives dragged Miss Daisy Lansbury off in a taxi, and I went free.

When the police authorities realized their mistake, and learnt that I was actually speaking in the Baths, they sent hundreds of men to take me, but though they scrutinised the people as they came from the hall, and most brutally ill-used men in the Roman Road outside, I escaped. Miss Emerson was again struck on the head, this time by a uniformed constable, and fell to the ground unconscious. Many other people were badly hurt. The people replied with spirit. Two mounted policemen were unhorsed, and many others were disabled.

Twice shortly afterwards I spoke in Canning Town Public Hall, and each time went free, the police, though present in large numbers to take me, preferring not to attack. One Sunday afternoon I spoke in Bow Palace, and marched openly with the people to Ford Road. When I spoke from the window afterwards a veritable forest of sticks was waved by the crowd. The police had evidently guessed that we were armed, and so treated us with respect. It was not until my eighth Meeting, at Shoreditch Town Hall, a district in which the East London Federation had never before held a meeting that I was taken.

As a result of the police raid on Bow Baths on October 13th, and the police treatment of the people on Nov. 5th, the Poplar Borough Council unjustly refused to let for Suffragette meetings Bow Baths, the Bromley Public Hall, and the Poplar Town Hall—the only large public halls in the Poplar Borough.

Police Raid in Tomlin's Grove.

Whilst I was in prison after my arrest at Shoreditch, a Meeting of Protest against the refusal of the public halls to the Suffragettes was held in Bow Palace, on Sunday afternoon, December 14th. After the Meeting it was arranged to go in procession around the district, and to hoot outside the houses of hostile Borough Councillors. A strong force of police both on horse and foot assaulted the people in Tomlin's Grove. Many people were seriously hurt by the policemen, including the big drummer and a number of passers by. The police even snatched the bandsmen's instruments away and through them over the garden walls. Nine people were arrested.

In the Christmas holidays a Suffrage school was held by the Federation at which lectures on technical subjects bearing upon the women's movement were given by Dr. Flora Murray, Dr. Jessie Murray, Mr. Nevinson, Mr. Joseph Clayton, Miss Bonwick and others.

In the meantime Lady Sybil Smith, our first Treasure., had been obliged to resign at the end of December on account of home ties, and Mrs. D. A. Thomas had kindly undertaken to hold this post temporarily. In April she was succeeded by our present Hon. Treasurer, the Hon. Mrs. Haverfield.

Miss Dalgleish had resigned her post of Hon. Financial Secretary in November, and Miss Norah Smyth, our present Hon. Financial Secretary, took up the work.

Formation of the East London Federation of the Suffragettes.

At the close of 1913 it was wished by the W.S.P.U. leaders that the East London Federation should become a separate society in name, as already it was in regard to its finances, its practical organisation and actions.

On January 27th, 1914, at a meeting of the East London Federation Committee, held at 28, Ford Road, Bow, this was agreed to, and it was decided that the name of our organisation should now be "The East London Federation of the Suffragettes." Also that the colours instead of being the purple, white and green of the W.S.P.U., should be purple, white and green and red.

The change did not denote any alteration in either policy or principles. Since it has taken place we have found that it has worked entirely in the direction of greater and more speedy development.

Poplar By-election.

Immediately after the change came the Poplar by-election. On the eve of the contest I went secretly to our Committee Rooms and lived there during the campaign. Each afternoon we held two crowded women's meetings, having to turn the audience out at half time to make room for more women to come in. We also spoke to enthusiastic gatherings from the window every night. On the eve of the poll the Federation organised a procession in which a number of other Suffrage societies took part.

I marched in the Procession, and spoke afterwards to a vast Open-Air Meeting at the Dock gates. It was evident that most of the people there were prepared to act the part of bodyguard if necessary. There were many detectives watching by the road, but no more than half a dozen constables were to be seen. It had been widely advertised that I was to be there.

Why was no attempt made to arrest me? Why did not the detectives and policemen come cutting their way through the people with loaded sticks and truncheons so often as they before and since? Undoubtedly because it was the eve of the poll—a proof of the headway suffragettes had made with the electorate. The detectives themselves told me when arresting me on a subsequent occasion that that night in Poplar we were surrounded by too many friends, and the spirit of the crowd was too militant for any such attempt to be made.

Fourth Trafalgar Square Meeting

On March 8th was held another procession from East London and a Demonstration in Trafalgar Square. I was arrested before getting to the meeting, and after the speeches, as a protest, a rush was made towards Downing Street, in which five men and five women, including Miss Mary Phillips, Miss Bennett, Miss McKay and Miss Gliksten, were arrested. On March 9th, a further protest was made by East London Suffragists, by the smashing of windows in Mr. McKenna's house, the Colonial Office and the Home Office.

First Publication of the "Woman's Dreadnought."

But a more important event on March 8th than the Trafalgar Square meeting was the issuing of the East London Federation's newspaper, the WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT, the only ½d. weekly Suffrage newspaper in the world. An advance number of this paper was first published at 1d., on March 8th, for the Trafalgar Square meeting, and the first regular weekly ½d. number came out on March 21st.

The WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT is the only Suffrage paper in the country which makes a distinct appeal to working people. It deals with the franchise question from the working woman's point of view, and reports the activities of the women in the labour world. Many of its contributors are working women who write their personal experiences of wages, housing, Poor Law, and so on. Experts on social questions, such well known Suffragists as Mrs. Mansell-Moullin, Mr. Mansell-Moullin, Mrs. Arncliffe Sennett, Mr. George Lansbury, Mrs. Scurr, Dr. Tchykovski, Mrs. Mary Leigh, Mrs. Cavendish Bentinck, Mr. Nevinson, Miss Theodora Bonwick, Mr. Laurence Housman, Mr. Joseph Clayton, and Suffragist leaders from other countries, are also contributors to its columns.

The DREADNOUGHT at once proved itself to be an invaluable help to the local work of the Federation—demand for it is springing up more and more amongst working men and women all over the country.

The circulation would be greatly increased if the Federation could afford to pay for the display of posters and for other forms of advertisement, but so far this has been impossible owing to the lack of funds. Some newsagents have kindly displayed posters gratuitously, but it is customary for book-stalls and railway stations to charge 20s. to 30s. a year for each poster.

March to Westminster Abbey.

Perhaps the most impressive demonstration yet held by the East London Federation of the Suffragettes was that on Sunday, March 22nd, when the appropriate occasion of "Mothering Sunday" was chosen to organise a procession from Bow to Westminster Abbey, to pray for the granting of Votes for Women. I had been released from Holloway, on hunger and thirst strike, exactly a week before, and so I was still too weak to walk in the procession. A wheeled spinal carriage was therefore provided, in order that I might go with the people. My "Cat and Mouse" license had expired the day before, and our friends were so much afraid lest the police should come to re-arrest me, that they crowded round the little carriage until the wheels were buckled. Six men in the crowd at once lifted it shoulder high, and relays of volunteers were forthcoming to carry me to Westminster. An immense procession marched to the Abbey, being joined by recruits all the way. We were refused admission to the Abbey, which was alleged to be already full, but the service conducted for us outside by Rev. C. A. Wills, was more impressive than that held within.

A fortnight later, on April 5th, another great meeting was held in Victoria Park, the Hyde Park of East London, to which the people marched in procession from Canning Town via Poplar. As I had made but poor progress in recovering from the hunger strike, the people again carried me to the Park, and no arrest was made.

May 1st.

On May 1st, when all the Trade Unions of the country were celebrating the Festival of Labour, the East London Federation of the Suffragettes had its own platform in Hyde Park, and the crowd that assembled here with East London working women was bigger than that at any other platform.

Arrest on Woman's May Day.

On May 24th the Federation held its second Woman's May Day in Victoria Park On that occasion the mounted police attacked the procession, shutting all the gates of the Park in order to secure an arrest. Some vigorous fighting took place, and the Park railings were broken down by the people who were determined to enter. Unfortunately, several people received very rough treatment.

Opening of the Women's Hall.

Meanwhile, on May 4th, another big new move was made in the opening of the Women's Hall, 400 Old Ford Road, the new premises including: a house, to which Mr. and Mrs. Payne moved with us; a large hall, holding about 350 people; and a smaller hall, holding about 50 or 60. The Women's Hall at once became the centre of many activities. Every Sunday, except when big open-air demonstrations are taking place, there is a Votes for Women meeting, at which some of the best speakers in the movement are to be heard, whilst music and recitations, at first by Miss Gliksten, afterwards by Miss Murray Clark, take up the first three-quarters of an hour. A Speakers' Class and two Members' Meetings were held each week in the Women's Hall, and a choir for men's and women's voices was started. A Junior Suffragette's Club for girls between 14 and 18, formed during the summer, meets on Wednesday evenings. A Christmas Savings' Club was also formed by the Bow, Hackney and Canning Town branches of the Federation. Stalls on Friday nights and Saturdays for selling the WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT and other literature were held regularly, during the year, in Bow and occasionally in Poplar, and proved an excellent means of advertisement.

Deputation to Prime Minister.

But the biggest and most successful effort the East London Federation had yet made took place in June.

When I was released from my eighth hunger and thirst strike under the "Cat and Mouse" Act, on May 30th, it was decided to organise a popular demonstration from East London to the Prime Minister, to demand Votes for London.

Three crowded public Rally Meetings were arranged in Bow, in Limehouse, and in Canning Town, at which the members of the deputation were elected, and the actual terms of the demand to be made were put to the vote. Three alternatives were put to the audiences:—

(1) To demand simply Votes for Women, leaving it to the Government to draft the acual Bill embodying this reform, and reserving to ourselves the right to criticise its terms.

(2) To demand Votes for Women on the terms at present exercised by men, with a promise that women are to have an equal share in the Adult Suffrage Reform Bill, which the Government say they intend to introduce.

(3) To demand a Vote for every woman over 21 years of age.

In each meeting the audience decided almost unanimously to demand that the Vote should be granted to every woman over 21 years of age.

As soon as I had been released from prison, I wrote to Mr. Asquith calling upon him to receive it. He refused. We had fixed the deputation for June 10th, and on June 8th, I wrote urging him to change his mind, and restating, as I had announced from the first, that should the deputation be refused and I snatched away from them and dragged back to Holloway, I should continue my hunger and thirst strike both in prison, and when released, on the steps of the strangers entrance to the House of Commons, until either the deputation be received or I should die. Mr. Asquith promptly refused to receive the deputation.

On the evening of June 10th, a vast crowd assembled outside 400 Old Ford Road to march to the House of Commons, and a second procession assembled at the East India Dock Gates, Poplar, it being announced that the processions should converge at Gardiner's corner.

The Bow procession had not proceeded far when the police who were present in large numbers snatched away the stretcher on which I was being carried and took me back to Holloway.

The processionists marched to within a mile of the House, then broke their ranks, and in order to keep within regulations, proceeded individually to the door. All were at first refused admittance, but eventually Mr. Lansbury induced Sir William Byles to take nine women and three men into the Lobby. This deputation interviewed Mr. Illingworth, the Chief Liberal Whip, who promised to take a letter to Mr. Asquith.

From this time onward the E.L.F.S. members and many men and women friends lobbied constantly during the hours that the House was sitting, and also picketted the gates of Holloway both day and night. They were also vigorous and constant in poster parading, and DREADNOUGHT selling.

On Thursday, June 18th, I was released from Holloway and taken by a wardress to 400 Old Ford Road. Miss Smyth and other pickets followed in a motor car in which I was then driven to the House of Commons. The police who were massed in strong force at the door, announced that the Speaker had ordered them to prevent my entering. After waiting some time whilst Mr. Keir Hardie tried to induce the Speaker to alter his decision, I was helped from the car and sat down on the steps of the small door beside the Stranger's entrance.

The police ordered me to go, and an inspector was just in the act of stooping to drag me up when Mr. Lansbury rushed up in the nick of time with a promise from the Prime Minister to receive the deputation on Saturday, June 20th, two days later.

The deputation consisted of Mrs. Scurr and Mrs. Bird of Poplar, Mrs. Payne, Mrs. Hughes and Mrs. Watkins of Bow, and Mrs. Parsons of Canning Town. As had been arranged, the deputation demanded an immediate measure to give a vote to every woman over 21 years of age. They also demanded my unconditional release, and that of Mrs. Walker, who, on June 16th had been sentenced to a month's imprisonment under the Act of Edward III for a speech delivered at Limehouse Town Hall on June 3rd. A verbatim report of the speeches of the deputation appeared in the WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT No. 15, dated June 27th. Very full reports also appeared in the entire Press of the country, and the editorial comments were very much more cordial than any that had hitherto appeared in regard to the Suffrage question.

The Prime Minister's Reply.

In replying to the deputation Mr. Asquith said:—

"I think I am right in saying that the substance of the case you have presented to me to-day comes to this: that the economic conditions under which women labour in a community like, for instance, the East End of London, are such that either in the way of legislation, or perhaps in the way of administration, we cannot get substantial and intelligent reform unless women themselves have a voice in choosing representatives for Parliament. . . . You have each of you given me illustrations drawn from your own experience or from the experience of your leaders to show that that is not a mere rhetorical statement, but does correspond to the actual facts of East End life.

"As I say I am not going to argue because I will take all these things into careful consideration.

He added:—

"If the change has to come we must face it boldly and make it thorough going and democratic.

The Prime Minister concluded by promising again *"must careful and mature consideration."*

Mr. Asquith's reply was hailed by the Press as a great advance on his previous statements. The *Manchester Guardian* declared it to be "a most happy augury." The *New Statesman* said, "a distinct step forward." *The Nation:* "A new chapter of hope in the history of this question. . . . Nothing less than the powerful opposition of the Prime Minister could have delayed it during the last three years. . . . The tone of Mr. Asquith's answer to the East End deputation makes for the hope that his attitude in future will be less unqualified." *The Labour Leader:* "No expression was given to the determined opposition with which he once met Women's Suffrage arguments, and beneath his words there seemed to be a recognition that the enfranchisement of women cannot long be delayed." *The Christian Commonwealth:* "We heartily welcome the unmistakable softening of Mr. Asquith's attitude."

Though we have written to him many times for it Mr. Asquith has never given the result of his promised "mature consideration." Mrs. Walker was left in prison to serve her full sentence, but I was not re-arrested, though out of my three month's sentence 20 days still remained to serve. I was never formally notified that I should not be re-arrested.

On June 28th the E.L.F.S. held another Trafalgar Square demonstration in which the Forward Cymric Suffrage Union and the United Suffragists joined.

Overseas Visitors.

On July 9th the New Woman Suffrage Society for the British Dominions Overseas held their first Conference, and on July 10th the E.L.F.S. arranged an East London tour for the overseas visitors. On July 10th the visitors were entertained at the Woman's Hall, Bow.

On July 12th, a procession marched from Bow to Canning Town Public Hall, where a great meeting was held at which many of the Overseas visitors were present.

After this it seemed that holidays and steady propaganda work should be continued through the summer with a view to more effective militant action when Parliament met for the autumn session. The No Rent strike for the vote was the big achievement towards which it seemed advisable to work.

The Declaration of War.

But our plans were overturned by the declaration of War on August 4th. As soon as that happened the E.L.F.S. Committee was called together, and it was decided that the Federation must take an actively vigilant part in striving to protect the women during the International crisis in which it was certain that they must suffer terribly in any event.

Food and Rent.

The food question engaged our immediate attention, for prices at once rose enormously, and even at the enhanced prices many poor housewives were unable to buy, because of the panic buying by richer people.

The E.L.F.S. at once demanded that the Government should control the supply of food, and that the Moratorium should be extended to cover rent.

The question of immediately proclaiming the No Rent strike in order to secure this and to win votes for women was considered by a general meeting, but it was decided that the time was inopportune, as in the meantime prices had been reduced considerably and it had been demonstrated that there was no immediate danger of a shortage of food. The Emergency Courts Acts which afforded some protection against eviction had also been passed.

As it was held, however, that complete Government control of the food supply was still necessary, a deputation from the Federation waited upon the President of the Board of Trade on September 2nd, and demanded that:

> During the War the food supply shall be controlled by the Government in the interests of all the people, and that working women shall be placed on all Committees for fixing food prices.

The deputation supplied Mr. Runciman with a number of family budgets, showing great hardships still being suffered by poor women to whom it is barely possible to make ends meet at the best of times.

Public Work for the Unemployed.

As soon as War broke out the E.L.F.S. also demanded that working men and women thrown out of employment by the War should be provided with work at Trade Union rates by the Government, pointing out that agriculture and horticulture, food preserving, cattle rearing, and dairying, were all rendered doubly important because of the War, and that for the preservation of the coming generation, improvements in housing and sanitation were urgently overdue.

The Federation also demanded that women should be paid a minimum wage of not less than 5d. an hour or £1 a week on all work subsidised by public funds, or when employed by Government contractors.

Military and Naval Pensions and Separation allowances.

The Federation also demanded that Military and Naval Pensions and separation allowances shall be paid as a right not a charity, at the rate of £1 a week for an adult and 5s. a week for each child. The Federation has also emphatically protested against the police supervision of soldiers' wives and mothers.

More Deputations.

To put forward these views, deputations from the E.L.F.S. waited upon the War Office and the Committee for London. A petition to the Queen calling for the minimum wage of 5d. an hour or £1 a week, above referred to, was drafted on behalf of the E.L.F.S., and signed by a number of representative men and women. The Queen was asked to receive a deputation, but instead we were received by Miss Mary MacArthur, the Secretary of the National Committee for Women's Employment, which administers the Queen's Work for Women Fund.

To press forward these various objects and of course to reiterate the demand for the enfranchisement of women, several large deputations from the E.L.F.S. waited upon Members of Parliament at the House of Commons, and meetings were held at the East India Dock Gates, Canning Town Public Hall, Limehouse Town Hall, Devonshire Hall, Hackney, and the Pavilion, Brighton, and we have had two meetings in the Caxton Hall, Westminster. Our regular indoor and outdoor meetings have been continued.

Coping with East London Distress.

As soon as war was declared the E.L.F.S., especially in Bow, found itself a centre to which numbers of women in distress through the War were constantly coming for advice and practical help. It was intensely gratifying to realize that so many women felt that the Suffragettes were their friends.

A Distress Bureau was at once opened at the Women's Hall, Bow, where all applicants were registered on cards similar to those used in connection with the Prince of Wales's Fund. Soldiers' and Sailors' wives and mothers were, and are, advised in regard to obtaining pensions and separation allowances; the local Soldiers' and Sailors' Association, Army Paymasters and the War Office are communicated with, the Federation acting as a Trade Union or as a family solicitor might have done, on their behalf. Similar help and advice was and is, given to persons thrown out of work through the War or suffering in any way because of it. Many chronic Poor Law cases also came at once for help, and in these the Federation then endeavoured to secure increased allowances, in view of the enhanced cost of living due to the War. Our representatives have several times been to Court to plead with Magistrates to refuse to allow evictions under the Emergency Courts Act, and we have been successful in obtaining the release from prison of a soldier's father who had been committed for inability to pay a fine incurred through poverty.

The Federation though hitherto unable to induce the Government to make a definite rule that women shall not be employed for less than 5d. an hour when engaged in Army contracts, has secured the raising of wages in a number of cases, notably that of Kent's, Army Brushmakers, whose rates of pay were raised from 1s. 1d. and 1s. 2d. to 1s. 7d. a dozen brushes.

Extensions in Bromley, Poplar and Canning Town.

The distress work started in Bow was almost immediately carried into Poplar and Bromley. At first it was done at the old offices at 319 East India Dock Road, and Crowder Hall, Bow Road, but on September 28th the Poplar Women's Hall was opened at 20 Railway Street, and on October 26th the Crowder Hall work was removed to 53 St. Leonard Street, Bromley. Distress work was began later in Canning Town, and the centre which has been opened at Butcher's Road is as yet of much smaller scope.

Mothers' and Babies' Centres.

Within a week of the War we started in Bow a daily free distribution of milk

(*Continued on page 172, col. 2.*)

ORIGINAL DEFECTIVE.

Members must be sure to attend the—

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

AT

BOW BATHS,

Monday, Jan. 4th, 1915,

8 p.m.

All members should by now be in possession of copies of the resolutions and nomination forms. The nomination forms are NOT voting papers. The vote will be taken at the Conference. In addition to the resolutions on the agenda, a resolution will be brought forward to the effect that men shall be admitted to the Federation as Associates.

It is essential that every member should be present to vote for the officers of the Federation in 1915, and to decide other business.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST,
Hon. Sec.

DISTRICT REPORTS.

BOW.

The first members meeting of the year will be held on Friday, January 1st, at 8 p.m. Members are urged to make a special effort to attend as there is important business to be discussed. The Committee and Auditors of the Savings Club for 1915 will be elected, and the final arrangements for the Children's Party on Saturday, January 2nd, will be made. Those who have not yet bought their tickets for the Annual New Year Party can obtain them then. A suggestion for starting a Coal Club will be discussed. Miss Sylvia Pankhurst hopes to be present.

BROMLEY.

The first members meeting of the year will be held on Tuesday, January 5th. The election of a Committee and Auditors for the Savings Club, and the starting of a Coal Club is included in the business of the evening. It is hoped that members will begin the year well by turning up in large numbers.

POPLAR.

THE WOMEN'S HALL, 20 RAILWAY ST.

The first members meeting of the year will be held on Tuesday, January 5th. The business to be brought forward includes the election of a Committee and Auditors for 1915, the arrangements to be made for the Poplar Children's Party on January 11th; and the starting of a Coal Club. Miss Sylvia Pankhurst hopes to be present. Members are urged to make a special effort to attend.

SOUTH WEST HAM.

Centre for Tidal Basin and Custom House—14 Butchers' Road.

The first members meeting of the year will be held on Thursday, January 7th, when Miss Sylvia Pankhurst hopes to be present. All members are urged to come, as there is important business to be discussed. The Committee and Auditors of the Savings Club for 1915 will be elected, and the starting of a Coal Club will be discussed. Arrangements for the Children's Party on January 23rd, will also be made. Do not forget to keep this evening free.

The announcements for HACKNEY and LIMEHOUSE are held over until next week

CHILDREN'S PARTIES.

Bow Baths,
Saturday, January 2nd, 1915,
3 p.m.

Poplar Town Hall,
Monday, January 11th, 1915,
6 p.m.

Canning Town Public Hall,
January 23rd, 1915.

Admission by Invitation.

Members of the E.L.F.S. are entitled to tickets for their children, or, if unmarried, for small brothers and sisters, but no other relations are eligible.

Applications for tickets should be made in:

BOW, on Thursday, December 31st, or Friday, January 1st, at 400 Old Ford Road.

POPLAR, on or after Tuesday, January 5th, at 20 Railway Street.

CANNING TOWN, on or after January 5th, at 14 Butcher's Road, in the afternoon.

to the babies of necessitous mothers. This work has extended so rapidly that in the Bow centre milk is supplied daily to upwards of 190 milk cases, and the number in Poplar is little smaller. Milk depots were also opened simultaneously with the distress bureaux at Bromley and Canning Town.

We soon realized the advisability of combining the milk distribution with regular weekly baby weighing, regular visits to the doctor who attends weekly at the centre and regular home visitation by a qualified nurse. As rapidly as possible these features have been added, together with the provision of maternity outfits, Glaxo, Virol, eggs, barley and other things ordered by our doctors. The progress made by the mothers and babies under our care has been most marked and many lives have been saved.

Restaurants.

To provide milk only for the nursing and expectant mothers and the babies, whilst the entire family was in need of food was well enough in its way, but exceedingly incomplete. The mothers moreover could not live on milk alone. We therefore determined to open "cost price" restaurants at which two-course meals might be bought at 1d. for children and 2d. for adults and free meals, especially in the case of nursing and expectant mothers might be given where necessary. This has been done in Bow, Poplar and Bromley. The Bow restaurant was started on August 31st.

Work for the Unemployed.

The best solution for distress arising through unemployment is, of course, the provision of properly paid work, and though this is a costly enterprise, the E.L.F.S. has been able to do something also in this direction. In the DREADNOUGHT dated August 15th we were able to announce that we had already opened an employment bureau and were ourselves employing a limited number of women at a wage of 5d. an hour. This work has steadily increased and the E.L.F.S. now employs, quite apart from the political organisers and secretaries, 59 regular indoor workers on relief work of one kind or another, all but five of whom are on full time, and also a varying number of outworkers. None of the adult workers receive less than 5d. an hour or £1 a week, some get more.

Our Factory.

We have opened a factory at 45 Norman Road, Bow, where we are making dolls, toys and garments. Dolls' wax heads are made specially for us in London, and China heads in the potteries from a model kindly given to us by Miss Dowing. Dolls' wigs are specially made for us in Dewsbury. Boots and shoes are made for the Federation under Mr. Payne, at 400 Old Ford Road.

Our manufactures will be put on a co-operative basis as soon as they are able to cover the cost of production and pay a fair wage for labour. Until that time we must subsidise them and hope for generous subscriptions from our friends to enable us to do so adequately.

Our Nursery.

We have opened a day nursery at 45 Norman Road, Bow, in connection with our factory, where women may leave their children at a cost of 3d. a day, including food. There are at present a dozen children in the nursery, and we are daily obliged to turn applicants away for lack of room, as subscriptions do not yet warrant an extension of our premises.

The E.L.F.S. is specially indebted for help in its relief work to Mrs. Payne, Miss Mackay and Miss Edith Jones for work at the Distress Bureau and Maternity centre in Bow; to Mrs. Drake and Miss Hicks for similar work in Poplar; to Mrs. McCheyne and Mrs. Mantle in Bromley, and to Mrs. Parsons at Canning Town. Also to doctors Simpson and Royle, and to our devoted nurses. We also have to thank very cordially Mrs. Richmond and Miss Morgan Brown for taking charge of the Bow and Poplar Restaurants, and for providing private work for a number of women; also the other kind helpers who have given their services in the restaurants, and to Lady Sybil Smith who so ably organised the nursery and has been untiring in serving there herself and in finding others who have given valuable help. We must also thank Miss Stewart who has conducted the regular sales of our toys at 400 Old Ford Road, and the many friends who have arranged sales elsewhere. There are many others to whom the Federation has reason to be grateful, both for personal service and for subscriptions.

Children's Parties.

The E.L.F.S. is organising three large Children's Parties in Bow Baths, Poplar Town Hall and Canning Town Public Hall. Mrs. Ancliffe Sennett is kindly giving us two Christmas trees, and Miss Murray Clark who teaches our choir and provides music for our Sunday meetings is organising the entertainments.

Clothing.

We have been enabled by the kindness of many friends to hold regular sales of clothing, at very low prices, at each of our centres, and also to give numbers of garments away.

Prince of Wales's Fund, Poplar.

Whilst developing our own schemes of relief, which would have been but temporary had the National arrangements been adequate, the E.L.F.S. felt it necessary to claim representation on the local Mayor's Committees. We wrote offering our services in the Boroughs of Poplar, Hackney, Stepney and Canning Town. In Poplar I was placed on the Mayor's Committee to represent the E.L.F.S., and Miss Smyth, Mrs. Cheyne and Mrs. Winters obtained seats on the local Mayor's committees.

As the E.L.F.S. representative on the Poplar Mayor's Committee, I have to report that the administration of the Prince of Wales's fund in the Borough is unsatisfactory in the extreme. The delays in granting relief have been wholly unwarrantable, and the Mayor, ignoring the decisions of the main committee, has relieved on a grossly inadequate scale. The Cabinet Committee has arbitrarily ordered the reduction of the relief for the Borough and the Mayor, again ignoring his Committee has complied.

In this connection the E.L.F.S. organised a deputation to the Cabinet Committee which was received by Mr. Herbert Samuel and Mr. John Burns. By this means the reduction of relief was partially checked. Exposures in the "WOMAN'S DREADNOUGHT" have also served to this end, but further vigilence is most necessary, and a meeting to discuss this question is being held by the E.L.F.S. in Bow Baths, on January 15th.

Future Work.

In concluding this brief statement of the work of our Federation, I wish most earnestly to impress on every member the need for further extending our membership for increasing the sales of our paper, and for the active and hearty co-operation of every individual member of the E.L.F.S.

Votes were never so much needed by women as they are to-day. It was never before so necessary to the community that women should have the vote.

The East London Federation of the Suffragettes is essentially a working woman's organisation. Let us together make it a powerful force in winning votes for working women and in fighting for the interests of working women in every department of life.

E. SYLVIA PANKHURST,
Hon. Secretary, E.L.F.S.

TO CHILDREN WHO HAVE MORE TOYS THAN THEY WANT.

Will you not send some of your toys for the children of the E.L.F.S.? They will treasure one toy more than you treasure all you have. Address your parcels to Miss N. Smyth, 400, Old Ford Road, and send it as soon as you can. We want a toy for every child at our parties on January 2nd, January 11th and January 23rd.

On Tuesday, January 5th, an entertainment will be given at the Suffrage Club, 3 York Street, St. James', at 8 p.m., in aid of the International Suffrage Shop (which has helped the E.L.F.S. in its Milk Collections and in other ways) the performers include the Misses Eva Boydell, Gwendoline Cook, Constance Fairbairn, Lettice Fox, Etheldreda Gore Brown, Lilian Lenton and Gladys Seymour. Tickets 2s. 6d., 1s. and 6d., may be obtained from the I.S.S., 5 Duke Street, Villiers Street, Strand, W.C.

WANTED at once. Oddments of knitting wool to make into coloured balls for children. All colours acceptable, especially black (which throws up the brighter colours). No remnants too small to be used. Please address to Miss Sharp, 321 Roman Road, Bow, E.

E.L.F.S. . .

ANNUAL NEW YEAR'S PARTY,

Bow Baths, Roman Rd.,

ON

SATURDAY, JANUARY 2nd,

AT EIGHT P.M.

SPLENDID CONCERT.

Miss Land
Miss Marguerite Beauvais
Miss Beatrice Beauvais
Miss Spong Miss Ruth Hill
Miss Irene Bouvier
Miss Darling-Jacobs
Miss Murray Clark
Miss Inez Bensusan
Miss Janette Steer
Me. Levinskayia
And others.

HERALD LEAGUE BAND.

DANCING,

Fancy Dress optional.

(Prize for the best dress.)

ADMISSION 3d.

Tickets may be obtained at 400 Old Ford Road, Bow; 321 Roman Road, Bow; 20 Railway Street, Poplar; and at 14 Butcher's Road, Canning Town, (in the afternoon).

Friends outside the district will be able to buy tickets at the door of the Baths.

Take a No. 8 Bus from the Bank or Liverpool Street almost to the door

BE SURE TO COME!

CLOTHING STALLS.

Clothing stalls, where new and second-hand clothes may be bought at very low prices, are open at 400 Old Ford Road, Bow, on Fridays and Saturdays, at 20 Railway Street, Poplar on Monday at 6 p.m., and at 53 St. Leonard Street on Fridays and Saturdays. We shall be glad if friends can send us any clothes for these stalls. Boots and shoes are very urgently needed. The stall will be closed till January 8th.

All parcels should be sent to 400 Old Ford Road, E., addressed to Miss N. L. Smyth.

MOTHERS AND BABIES.

We lend necessitous mothers outfits for their babies, for the first months.

FOR BABY.

Four gowns, four barrows, two flannel bands, twelve napkins, three vests and a cot blanket.

FOR MOTHER.

Two nightgowns, a woollen shawl, three towels, two sheets and one pair pillowcases.

Our milk bill increases weekly. We urgently need subscriptions towards it; also gifts of:—

EGGS.

For invalids and babies who are too ill to digest milk, and are given the white of egg beaten up in water.

ARROWROOT, BARLEY & RICE, BORACIC POWDER, BORACIC LINT, VASELINE, ZINC OINTMENT, COD LIVER OIL AND MALT.

Dr. Jukes will attend at 400 Old Ford Rd. at 2.30 p.m. on Mondays beginning January 4th., and at 53 St. Leonard St., Thursdays at 2.30 beginning January 7th.

Dr. Royle attends 20 Railway St., Poplar, Monday, 3 to 5 p.m.

GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGED.

Held over on account of the holidays.

WE URGENTLY NEED MORE MONEY!

GIVE THIS PAPER TO A FRIEND.

Printed by E. H. Williams (Kegd T.U.), 232 Devons Road, Bow, E., and Published by the East London Federation of the Suffragettes, at their offices, 321 Roman Road, Bow, E.

ORIGINAL DEFECTIVE.